

perhaps his legendary driving record. [Laughter] Since 1988 things have gone better; he's had a white pickup, but I hear the driving is about the same. [Laughter]

I could also talk about his love of family, such a mainstay of his life. You talk about Helen Walton who, as Senator Pryor told me on the way down, is the soul of Wal-Mart. Her love of the arts inspires so many. Her faith, her deep faith in God, comes shining through.

The story of Sam Walton is an illustration of the American dream. His success is our success, America's success. And when Sam's grandchildren read about what makes America great, they'll read about people who have grand ideas and great dreams, resourceful people who make imagination come alive with accomplishment. And they'll read about adventurous people who have the drive, ambition, and talent to take big risks and to achieve great things; people who bring prosperity to their community and to their country. Sam's grandkids, like my own little guy over here, his down here, will read about people like Sam Walton.

And sir, you are generous and genuine, tireless and tenacious. You took risks and helped our country grow vigorous and strong. You brought out the best in people. You and Helen have honored the important

things in life: friendship, faith, and family. And at a time when young Americans look for role models, those are noble virtues. And your life is going to help them appreciate that ours is the freest, most blessed country on the face of the Earth. I salute you, sir, for your vision, and I am proud to give you your Nation's highest civilian honor.

And now, may I ask you all to be seated as we honor a man who loves his country, who loves his family, given far more than he's gotten.

And now if Major Cancilla of the United States Army will read the citation, I will present to Sam Walton the Medal of Freedom.

*Note: The President spoke at 11:08 a.m. at Wal-Mart Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Helen Walton, Mr. Walton's wife; James L. (Bud) Walton, Mr. Walton's brother and cofounder of Wal-Mart; David Glass, president and chief executive officer of Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.; Representative John Paul Hammerschmidt; Senator David Pryor; George Billingsley, Bentonville businessman and longtime friend of the Walton family; and Maj. Russell J. Cancilla, Army Aide to the President.*

## Remarks at a St. Patrick's Day Ceremony and an Exchange With Reporters

March 17, 1992

*The President.* May I just say to Minister Andrews how delighted I am to be here. I missed the traditional lunch on Capitol Hill, a lunch of genuine friendship between not only the parties here, but normally Ireland is so well-represented, as they were today. And as I think everyone knows, I was down in Arkansas for a Medal of Freedom ceremony. But may I say to our friends from Ireland, particularly the Minister, how sorry I am to miss the luncheon but how pleased I am to receive you here.

It gives me an opportunity to express, once again, the feeling I have and the feel-

ing the American people have about the Irish-American relationship. It is strong. It is good. And it is very, very important to us. And this ceremonial occasion gives me a chance to extend through the Minister to the people in Ireland our respects, our love, and our affection on this very special day.

So Mr. Minister, I'm glad you came our way, sir. And I'm delighted to have had this short visit.

*[At this point, Foreign Minister David Andrews of Ireland spoke and presented the President with a crystal bowl filled with*

*Irish shamrocks.]*

*The President.* Thank you very, very much.

Q. Mr. President, will the luck of the Irish be with Pat Buchanan on this day?

*Foreign Minister Andrews.* Yes and no, he asked me to say.

*The President.* I've got to put a little shamrock in here.

*Foreign Minister Andrews.* Did you want to say something in response?

*The President.* No.

#### *House Bank Controversy*

Q. How about Secretary Cheney, Martin, and Madigan bouncing checks, Mr. President?

*The President.* No, I have no comment on all that. I just got home and am looking about it. I heard that Secretary Cheney, as would be expected, did an outstanding job. I haven't seen the testimony, but needless to say I have great confidence in him, total confidence in his integrity. And I just haven't heard anything about any of the others.

What I've decided to do is let this matter unfold. It's a matter of considerable agony for good people on the Hill. And let's get the facts out, and then I think the American people are very smart. They will be able to make a determination as to what was wrongdoing and who were simply victims of a system that obviously has failed everybody. And so we'll just wait and see how that works out. But I have no further comment on that subject at all, so spare yourselves the agony of asking because I simply will not take any more questions on it on this marvelous St. Patrick's Day.

*Foreign Minister Andrews.* Irish journalist here.

*The President.* Sure.

#### *Northern Ireland*

Q. Mr. President, what role can the United States play in bringing forward the progress for peace in Northern Ireland?

*The President.* Well, I'm not sure. I think heretofore we've tried to be a catalytic role, tried to support, as the Minister generally said, certain funds. But we've got to be in close touch with the Government. But it is not a problem that we ourselves can work

out. It is a problem that because of the many Americans of Irish heritage we are vitally interested in and because of Ireland's own substantial role in the EC that we're vitally interested in, and as Ireland-U.S. relations that we're vitally interested in. But we simply are not in a position to dictate a solution, to in any way be the sole arbiter of this difficult situation. But I've told the Minister we would like to help in any way he deems possible. But again, it isn't easy, as he and I both know.

#### *Loan Guarantees for Israel*

Q. Mr. President, the Israeli loan guarantees, are they dead?

*The President.* What did you say?

Q. The Israeli loan guarantees, are they dead now?

*The President.* Well, I don't think they're dead. We have always wanted to go forward with loan guarantees. Our administration has been in the forefront of bringing and encouraging people to go home to Israel, whether it be from the Soviet Union or Ethiopia. We have a longstanding policy that feels that settlements are counterproductive to peace. This is not a new policy. This is a longstanding policy. And I am determined to see that that policy not be altered.

However, if there's room within that policy to do what we'd like to do, which is to support the people coming home, why, we'd like to do that. But settlements are counterproductive to peace, and everybody knows that. So we'll just have to wait and see. I have made my position very, very clear to the Congress, and Secretary Baker has done the same thing. And we have close historic relations with Israel, and they will always be that way. But we have a difference now, it appears, in terms of these settlements. But I have said over and over again that we want to help, we want to help in a humanitarian way, but that we simply are not going to shift and change the foreign policy of this country.

Yes, Brit [Brit Hume, ABC News]? And then I've got to go because I don't want to be rude to our guests. I want to say hello to our other friends here.

Q. What is your view, sir, of the compro-

mise that was discussed yesterday on the Hill that's been offered there? I understand you're about to meet with Senator Leahy.

*The President.* Well, I'm not sure which one you're talking about.

Q. Well, do you have something to say to Senator Leahy that might—

*The President.* No, I'm listening. They asked for a meeting with me, and I'm very glad to have a meeting with him. Secretary Baker has had many meetings with Senator Leahy. I talked to him over the weekend, and I look forward to the meeting. But we'll see what it is that he has on his mind. But our policy is very, very clear, Brit, and I just hope everybody understands that. It's not that we're shifting ground. And it's not that we are being—in my view, I don't think we're being difficult. We're being consistent.

Yes? Then I've got to go. I really do.

#### *House Bank Controversy*

Q. Why are you confident that you yourself did not bounce any checks? Were you able to go through your own records during your time?

*The President.* Well, I'll tell you, I went through whatever I've got. I was in Congress 1967 to 1970. You were about 4 at the time. And I can't find checks back that long; most people in America don't save them. I did find a ledger sheet that shows I have positive balances at the beginning—for 4 years, my own bookkeeping—have positive balances at beginning of every month, at the end. And I take great pride in the fact I don't bounce checks. But heavens knows, with the way the operation went up there, whether there's anything to it or not. I don't believe so. I'd like to be able to say I didn't do it. But I just don't know yet.

Q. Do you sympathize though with some Members of Congress who say the same things you did? They don't bounce checks either; they didn't bounce checks—

*The President.* Yes, I do. I—

Q. —and then they found out that they did.

*The President.* Yes, I can understand it. If, in other words, somebody writes a check and then he puts a stop order on it, and they go ahead and cash the check, and he's

overdrawn—absolutely. Of course, I sympathize with that. And I think there's a major institutional problem. The bank's been closed now. But I'll have more to say about that when the facts are out there. But I will, in the meantime, grunge through every file I can find stored away in little cubbyholes here or in Houston, Texas, and try to find checks from 1967 to 1970. And I challenge everybody out here to try to do the same thing so his conscience or hers will be clear when they're asking these questions. And all you young ones can't go back that far. But for us, please, all my vintage, go back and see if you can find those checks from 25 years ago.

Q. Does that mean there's some question in your mind then, sir, that—

*The President.* What?

Q. Does that suggest there's some question in your mind whether you did bounce a check?

*The President.* No, I have no question, but when I hear the fact that checks were stopped and then they went ahead and didn't stop them, why, who knows? But I don't think I ever did that. I really do feel very—my conscience is very clear on this. And I hope I can satisfy this understandable inquiry to go back that far.

#### *Presidential Primaries*

Q. What about Pat Buchanan, sir? When and how do you make peace with him, or does he have to talk to you?

*The President.* Well, I just keep my sights on these elections. And I think we'll do well today. It's a little early to tell. But what I've got to do is lead this country and then, in the meantime, take care of these primaries that crop up every Tuesday. And so far I'm very, very pleased with the results. And I'm going to keep plodding ahead and not criticize the opponent, just keep shooting for victory.

And I hope that we achieve that today in Michigan. I hope I achieve that today in Illinois. I felt good when I was in those two States, but it's a strange year. So we're taking nothing for granted. And yet, I cannot be out there campaigning. I was in each State one day. And I can't spend any more time doing that because I have re-

sponsibilities here and duties here, one of which is most pleasurable today, I might add, that I'm determined to fulfill.

*Q.* Can you and Pat make peace after all that's gone on?

*The President.* Well, I have a—I think so, yes; I really do.

*Q.* If Buchanan loses, should he get out?

*The President.* Let's go down and say hello.

*Note: The President spoke at 4:13 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.*

## Message to the Congress Transmitting the Poland-United States Nuclear Energy Cooperation Agreement

March 17, 1992

*To the Congress of the United States:*

I am pleased to transmit to the Congress, pursuant to sections 123 b. and 123 d. of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2153(b), (d)), the text of a proposed Agreement for Cooperation Between the United States of America and the Republic of Poland Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy with accompanying annex and agreed minute. I am also pleased to transmit my written approval, authorization, and determination concerning the agreement, and the memorandum of the Director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency with the Nuclear Proliferation Assessment Statement concerning the agreement. The joint memorandum submitted to me by the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Energy, which includes a summary of the provisions of the agreement and various other attachments, including agency views, is also enclosed.

The proposed agreement with the Republic of Poland has been negotiated in accordance with the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act of 1978 and as otherwise amended. In my judgment, the proposed agreement meets all statutory requirements and will advance the non-proliferation and other foreign policy interests of the United States. It provides a comprehensive framework for peaceful nuclear cooperation between the United States and Poland under appropriate conditions and controls reflecting our strong common commitment to nuclear non-proliferation goals.

Poland has consistently supported inter-

national efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. It was an original signatory of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and has strongly supported the Treaty. It is committed to implementing a responsible nuclear export policy, and declared in January 1978 that it intended to apply a full-scope safeguards nuclear export requirement. Poland supports the work of the NPT Exporters ("Zangger") Committee and adheres to the Nuclear Supplier Guidelines. It is a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and has played a positive role in the Agency's safeguards and technical cooperation activities. It has also cooperated with the United States and other like-minded members in working to prevent the politicization of the Agency. Poland is a party to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

I believe that peaceful nuclear cooperation with Poland under the proposed agreement will be fully consistent with, and supportive of, our policy of responding positively and constructively to the process of democratization and economic reform in Eastern Europe. Cooperation under the agreement will also provide opportunities for U.S. business on terms that fully protect vital U.S. national security interests.

I have considered the views and recommendations of the interested agencies in reviewing the proposed agreement and have determined that its performance will promote, and will not constitute an unreasonable risk to, the common defense and security. Accordingly, I have approved the agreement and authorized its execution and